

Experimental statistics: Children receiving care and support in Wales, 2017-18

30 October 2018
SFR 104/2018

This annual release summarises information on assessments and care and support provided to children aged under 18 by local authorities in Wales.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 changes the way people's needs are assessed and the way services are delivered, introducing new duties on local authority social services in relation to assessment and provision of care and support.

This is the second year of collection and this release is the second in this series of statistical outputs reporting on data derived from the [Children Receiving Care and Support](#) return. See the [Key quality information](#) section for more information about the data. Information on children's social services has been published previously in the Referrals, Assessments and Social Services for Children in Wales series of statistical outputs however results are not comparable due to changes to definitions in legislation and measurement.



There were 48,069 assessments^{1,2,3} of need for care and support undertaken for children during the year.

8,731 (20 per cent) led to a care and support plan^{1,2,3,4}

(1) Caerphilly and Newport were only able to provide data up until the 13th February 2018 and 6th March 2018 respectively. This was due to both local authorities migrating to a new ICT system.

(2) Includes children in the secure estate.

(3) If a child has need for care and support and is also a young carer, the child may have an assessment of their need for care and support, and an assessment of their need for support as a young carer.

(4) Based on data provided by 20 local authorities. Denbighshire and the Vale of Glamorgan were unable to provide information on the

number of assessments that led to a care plan.

Other key results for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018:

- 827 assessments¹ of need for support for young carers were undertaken, which led to the provision of 615 support plans for young carers¹.
- 30,628 care and support plans and support plans were reviewed¹, of which 27,451 (90 per cent) were within timescales agreed by children and professionals¹.
- 2,960 children were on Child protection registers at 31 March 2018.

(1) Based on data provided by 21 local authorities. The Vale of Glamorgan was unable to provide data. Caerphilly and Newport were only able to provide data up until the 13th February 2018, and 6th March 2018 respectively. This was due to ICT issues.

About this release

This release presents the key findings from the Children receiving care and support data collected for the second time in 2017-18 following implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act on 6 April 2016.

Two local authorities were unable to provide figures for all data items and two local authorities were unable to provide figures for the full reporting year.

Further information and full details for individual local authorities are published on [StatsWales](#).

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Accuracy

The Welsh Government worked with local authorities to collect statistics on the activities of children's social services through the [Children receiving care and support](#) return. Statisticians within the Welsh Government review the data and query any anomalies with local authorities between submissions to ensure coherence of the data received, and before tables are published. Data adhere to the national standards and guidance, thus ensuring coherence within and across organisations. Local authorities are expected to comply with the guidance notes for completion that accompany the data collection form.

The figures in this release reflect the final position of the 2017-18 data year, and are correct as at 31 March 2018. Not all local authorities provided complete returns. Two local authorities were unable to provide figures for all data items and two local authorities were unable to provide figures for the full reporting year. This was largely due to ICT issues.

These statistics are published as experimental statistics reflecting the scale of change continuing to happen in social services and ongoing system changes. More information on the designation of these statistics can be found in the [correspondence between the Welsh Government and the Office for Statistical Regulation](#).

Not included in the release but published on [StatsWales](#) is local authority level data. There may be anomalies for some local authorities when comparing with the previous year's data. As part of the submission process, local authorities are asked to confirm the accuracy of the submitted data. We will continue to work with local authorities to improve data quality and highlight areas of significant variation.

Where comparisons have been made with the previous year's data, only those local authorities who have been able to provide data for both years have been included.

Assessments and reviews

Information, advice and assistance

Under Section 128 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, local authorities are required to secure the provision of a service for providing people with information and advice relating to care and support, and assistance in accessing care and support.

During the year 2017-18, 41,635* children (or families) received advice and/or assistance from the Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) Service in relation to the child's own care and support or that of their friend/family member/person they care for/advocate for.

* Data based on 21 authorities

Assessments

Where it appears that a child may have needs for care and support, in addition to, or instead of, the care and support provided by the child's family, that child has a right to an assessment of those needs. Similarly, if it appears to the local authority that a young carer may have needs for support, a local authority must assess whether the young carer has needs for support (or is likely to do so in the future) and if they do, what those needs are or are likely to be.

The assessment process will often start when a person accesses the IAA service, but should not be restricted to being accessible through this service alone. If an assessment determines a person's identified needs are eligible to be met by the provision of care and support from the local authority, a care and support plan (or support plan for young carers) is developed and agreed.

Table 1: Number of assessments undertaken during the year, 2016-17 and 2017-18

	2016-17 (r)	2017-18 (a)
Number of assessments of need for care and support undertaken during the year (b)(c)	40,096	48,069
Of those, the number that led to a care and support plan (d)	8,609	8,731
Number of assessments of need for support for young carers undertaken during the year (e)	749	827
Of those, the number that led to a support plan (e)	462	615

Source: Children receiving care and support aggregate

(a) Caerphilly and Newport were only able to provide data up until the 13th February 2018 and 6th March 2018 respectively. This was due to both local authorities migrating to a new ICT system.

(b) Includes children in the secure estate.

(c) If a child has need for care and support and is also a young carer, the child may have an assessment of their need for care and support, and an assessment of their need for support as a young carer.

(d) Based on data provided by 21 local authorities in 2016-17 and 20 local authorities in 2017-18. Denbighshire was unable to provide data in both 2016-17 and 2017-18 and the Vale of Glamorgan was unable to provide data in 2017-18. This was due to ICT issues.

(e) Based on data provided by 21 local authorities in 2017-18. The Vale of Glamorgan was unable to provide data due to ICT issues.

(r) The data item has been revised since previously published.

[Table 1](#) shows there were 48,069 assessments of need for care and support undertaken during the year 2017-18; an increase of 20 per cent compared with 2016-17. For the local authorities which were able to provide data, 8,731** (20 per cent) led to a care and support plan. On a comparable basis, the number of assessments undertaken in 2017-18 was higher than in the previous year, however a smaller proportion led to a care and support plan.

There were 827* assessments for support undertaken during the year 2017-18. Of the local authorities which were able to provide data, 615* (74 per cent) led to a support plan. On a

comparable basis, there was an increase of 12 percentage points in the proportion of assessments for need for support that led to support plans in 2017-18 compared to 2016-17.

* Data based on 21 local authorities

** Data based on 20 local authorities

Secure estate

Local authorities also have a duty to assess and meet the care and support needs of children in the secure estate not just upon discharge but while they are in custody. For children, the duty falls on the child's Welsh home local authority whether they are placed in the secure estate in England or Wales.

Secure estate facilities for children are defined as prisons, approved premises, youth detention accommodation or bail accommodation. 31* assessments of need for care and support for children were undertaken during the year 2017-18 whilst in the secure estate. Of those assessments, 18* (58 per cent) led to a care and support plan.

* Data based on 21 local authorities

Repeat assessments

A child deemed ineligible for care and support following an assessment may request another assessment; if there has not been a significant change in the child's or family's needs or circumstances then this is counted as a repeat assessment for the purposes of this release.

Table 2: Number of repeat assessments undertaken during the year, 2016-17 and 2017-18

	2016-17 (r)	2017-18 (a)
Number of requests for repeat assessment of need for care and support and need for support made by a child, young carer or person with parental responsibility during the year (b)(c)	766	655
Of those, the number of repeat assessments undertaken (b)(c)	274	497
Of those, the number of repeat assessments that led to a care and support plan or support plan (b)(c)	116	199

Source: Children receiving care and support aggregate

(a) Caerphilly and Newport were only able to provide data up until the 13th February 2018 and 6th March 2018 respectively. This was due to both local authorities migrating to a new ICT system.

(b) 2016-17 and 2017-18 data based on data provided by 19 local authorities and 20 local authorities respectively. Ceredigion, Denbighshire and Flintshire were unable to provide information on requests for repeat assessments in 2016-17. Denbighshire and the Vale of Glamorgan were unable to provide the data in 2017-18.

(c) Includes children in the secure estate.

(r) The data item has been revised since previously published.

[Table 2](#) shows there were 655** requests for repeat assessments of need for care and support and need for support made by a child, young carer or person with parental responsibility, during the year 2017-18. Of which 497** assessments were undertaken and these led to 199** care and support plans. On a comparative basis, fewer requests for repeat assessments were made in 2017-18, however a higher proportion resulted in an assessment undertaken than in 2016-17. The proportion of repeat assessments which led to a care and support plan or support plan was broadly similar in 2016-17 and 2017-18.

** Data based on 20 local authorities

Reviews of care and support plans or support plans for young carers

Where a local authority is required to meet care and support needs it must prepare a care and support plan for the child concerned, or a support plan for the carer concerned. Local authorities must review care and support plans, under Part 4 and Part 6 of the Act, to understand whether the provision of that care and support is meeting the identified needs of the child and consider if their needs have changed.

Care and support plans must contain a clear date, which should be agreed by the practitioner and the child and/or family, by which the plan will be reviewed. In the case of a child, the date of review should be within set timescales for looked after children and children on the child protection register; and otherwise should not exceed 6 months.

Table 3: Number of care and support plans and support plans reviewed during the year, 2016-17 and 2017-18

	2016-17 (r)	2017-18 (a)
Number of care and support plans and support plans that were reviewed during the year (b)(c)	29,179	30,628
Of those, the number of plans that were reviewed within agreed timescales (b)(c)	26,415	27,451

Source: Children receiving care and support aggregate

(a) Caerphilly and Newport were only able to provide data up until the 13th February 2018 and 6th March 2018 respectively. This was due to both local authorities migrating to a new ICT system.

(b) Includes children in the secure estate and young carers.

(c) 2016-17 and 2017-18 data based on data provided by 19 local authorities and 21 local authorities respectively. Conwy, Denbighshire and Flintshire were unable to provide information on requests for repeat assessments in 2016-17. The Vale of Glamorgan was unable to provide the data in 2017-18. This was due to ICT issues.

(r) The data item has been revised since previously published.

[Table 3](#) shows there were 30,628* care and support plans reviewed during the year 2017-18, of which 27,451* (90 per cent) were reviewed within agreed timescales. This is a similar proportion as for 2016-17.

* Data based on 21 local authorities

Child protection register

The Child Protection Register records all children in the area for whom there are unresolved child protection issues and who are currently the subject of an inter-agency protection plan. Categories of abuse indicate the primary presenting concerns at the time of registration.

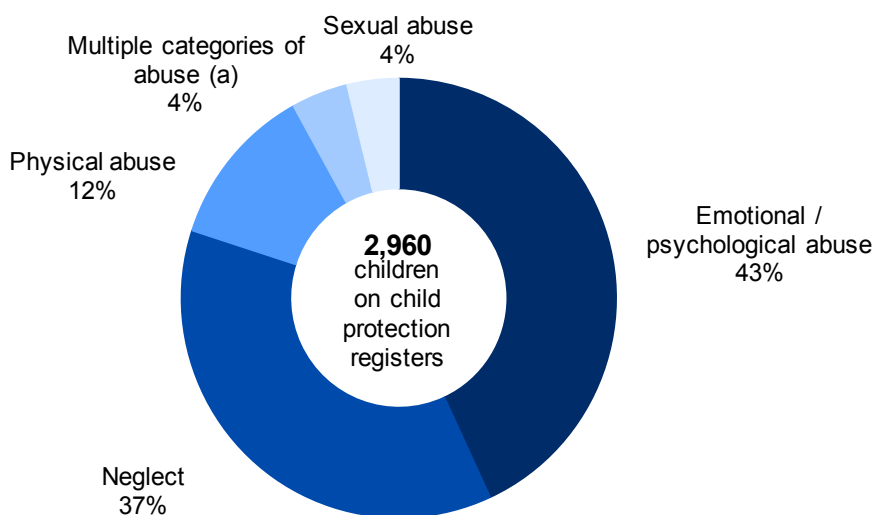
Table 4: Children on the child protection register at 31 March 2018

Category of abuse	Aged Under 1	Aged 1 - 4	Aged 5 - 9	Aged 10 - 15	Aged 16 - 18	Total
Emotional / psychological abuse	115	325	445	355	35	1,275
Neglect	155	300	300	290	45	1,090
Physical abuse	50	100	90	100	20	355
Sexual abuse	15	10	25	50	10	115
Neglect and physical abuse	10	20	30	15	*	80
Neglect and sexual abuse	*	5	5	10	5	30
Physical abuse and sexual abuse	*	*	*	5	*	10
Neglect, physical abuse and sexual abuse	*	*	*	*	*	10
Total	345	765	895	830	120	2,960

Source: Children receiving care and support aggregate

[Table 4](#) shows, for children on the child protection register at 31 March 2018, emotional/psychological abuse and neglect were the largest categories of abuse for each of the age groups. When looking at all ages, these categories accounted for 80 per cent of the total categories of abuse. Of the 115 children on the protection register due to sexual abuse, 25 (22 per cent) were under the age of 5.

Chart 1: Percentage of children on child protection registers, at 31 March 2018, by category of abuse



Source: Children receiving care and support aggregate

(a) Multiple categories include: Neglect and physical abuse; Neglect and sexual abuse; Physical abuse and sexual abuse; Neglect, physical abuse and sexual abuse.

There were 524 pre-birth child protection conferences convened during the year 2017-18, compared to 527 in 2016-17.

Glossary

Assessment: A product of the conversation between the individual or family and the practitioner designed to identify and determine how to meet care and support needs.

Care and support: Care, support and both care and support.

Care and support plan (or support plan for young carers): A description of a person's care and support needs and how these will be met.

Carer: A person who provides or intends to provide care for an adult or disabled child. A young carer refers to a child who is a carer.

Child: A person who is aged under 18.

Child protection register: A record of all children in the area for whom there are unresolved child protection issues and who are currently the subject of an inter-agency protection plan.

Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA): Information and advice relating to care and support, and assistance in accessing care and support, provided by the IAA service. Information is quality data that provides support to a person to help them make an informed choice about their well-being. Advice is a way of working co-productively with a person to explore the options available. Assistance, if needed, will follow the provision of information and advice, and involves another person taking action with the enquirer to access care and support, or a carer to access support.

Looked after child: A child who is in the care of a local authority or who is provided with accommodation by the local authority social services department for a continuous period of more than 24 hours.

Re-assessment: During a review, if it becomes apparent that there has been a significant change in the individual's or family's needs or circumstances the person may have a re-assessment and the care and support plan may need to be updated to ensure the services detailed in the plan are meeting the person's needs and outcomes.

Repeat assessment: If following an assessment, an individual is deemed ineligible for care and support but then requests another assessment, where there has not been a significant change in the individual's or family's needs or circumstances, this should be counted as a repeat assessment for the purposes of this return.

Review: A process by which the practitioner and the individual and/or family consider how effective the care and support plan has been in supporting the person to meet their identified well-being outcomes.

Secure estate: Secure estate facilities refer to prisons, approved premises, youth detention accommodation or bail accommodation.

Notes

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act came into effect on 6 April 2016. It is the new legal framework that brings together and modernises social services law in Wales. The Act changes the way people's needs are assessed and the way services are delivered. It introduces a new process for assessment and care planning.

From 6 April 2016, local authorities are expected to collect and return data on the activities of children's social services based on new reporting requirements developed in line with the implementation of Act. This release examines key findings for 2017-18 and is intended to monitor the introduction of the new assessment and eligibility model to support delivery, inform policy improvement and assess its impact.

Future developments

Data requirements in relation to measuring the impact that the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act is having on people who need care and support and carers who need support are currently being reviewed. It is intended that new data will be developed for the 2020-21 reporting year.

Key quality information

This section provides a summary of information on this output against five dimensions of quality: Relevance, Accuracy, Timeliness and Punctuality, Accessibility and Clarity, and Comparability and Coherence.

Relevance

The statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government to monitor children's social services trends and as a baseline for further analysis of the underlying data. More specifically they will provide a summary of activity in relation to new legal duties introduced in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act. Some of the key users are:

- Ministers and the Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales;
- the Department for Health and Social Services in the Welsh Government;
- other areas of the Welsh Government;
- local authorities;
- the third sector (e.g. charities);
- the research community;
- students, academics and universities;
- individual citizens and private companies.

The statistics may also be useful for other UK governments

- the Northern Ireland Executive's Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
- the Scottish Government, Analytical Services Division
- the Department for Education in England.

These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these uses include:

- advice to Ministers;
- to inform the social services policy decision-making process in Wales;
- local authority analysis;
- to inform the Care Inspectorate Wales;
- to model the financial consequences of changes in the population or the care system
- to assist in research on children receiving care and support.

Accuracy

Two local authorities were unable to provide figures for all data items and two local authorities were unable to provide figures for the full reporting year. This was largely as a result of ICT issues.

The figures for Table 4 are rounded to the nearest 5 for confidentiality. Where figures have been rounded there may be an apparent discrepancy between the sum of the constituent items and the total.

Occasionally, revisions can occur due to errors in our statistical processes or when a data supplier notifies the Welsh Government that they have submitted incorrect information. In these cases, a judgement is made as to whether the change is significant enough to publish a revised statistical release. Where changes are not deemed to be significant, figures will be corrected if they appear in future releases. However minor amendments to the figures may be reflected in the StatsWales tables prior to the next release.

Timeliness and punctuality

The Data Collection team within the Welsh Government collected data, for the year 2017-18 i.e. from 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018, between May and July 2018. Data in this release refers to final 2017-18 data. Once submitted data has been validated, this release is drafted and published as soon as possible. This release was published in October 2018, after being postponed from being published in September.

Accessibility and clarity

This statistical first release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics and Research section of the Welsh Government website. It is accompanied by more detailed tables on [StatsWales](#), a free to use service that allows visitors to view, manipulate, create and download data.

Comparability and coherence

2017-18 is the second year of collecting and reporting on data derived from the [Children receiving care and support](#) return. This statistical release provides figures at the Wales level. Further information for local authorities is available on [StatsWales](#). To ensure that the national data are comparable and consistent, local authorities are expected to comply with the guidance notes for completion that accompany the data collection form. When comparing figures for different local

authorities, relevant factors such as the size of the local authority population should be taken into account. [Local authority population estimates](#) by age can be found on StatsWales.

Data on social services for children has been published previously based on the Performance Management – Children’s services (PM1) data collection. Results are not comparable due to changes in legislation and to definitions and reporting requirements.

Statistics collected in each United Kingdom country may differ and the detailed guidance available from each country’s website should be consulted before using these statistics as comparative measures. Further information on comparability is available at the web page [UK Comparability of Children’s Social Services Statistics](#).

A similar statistical release for England can be accessed on the Department for Education website:

[Schools, colleges and children's services, DFE](#)

Children's Social Work Statistics for Scotland can be accessed on the Scottish Government website:

[Children's Social Work Statistics, Scottish Government](#)

Child protection statistics for Northern Ireland can be accessed on the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety website:

[Social care statistics, DoH Statistics & Research Northern Ireland](#)

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

Further details

The document is available at: <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/children-receiving-care-support/?lang=en>

Data at local authority level is available on [StatsWales](#).

Codes of practice and statutory guidance issued under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act are available at: [Codes of practice and statutory guidance](#)

Further information is available in other Social Services statistical releases on the Welsh Government web site at the [social services](#) theme page. This includes information on [Adults receiving care and support in Wales](#).

Information on the costs to local authorities of services provided for children are produced by the Welsh Government from local authority financial returns. Detailed figures are available on [StatsWales](#).

Next update

September 2019 (provisional)

We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to stats.pss@gov.wales.

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